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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO HEALTH POLICY COMMISSION TO STUDY  
THE IMPACT OF NURSE STAFFING AND RETENTION ISSUES ON  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

WHEREAS, New Mexico hospitals and other health care  
providers are facing serious shortages of professional  
nurses; and

WHEREAS, physicians and nurses agree that hospital  
staffing levels of nurses are often inadequate to ensure safe  
and effective care of patients; and

WHEREAS, a 2001 national study identified a clear link  
between nurse staffing levels and burnout, job  
dissatisfaction and nurse retention; and

WHEREAS, a 2002 report by the institute of medicine of  
the national academy of sciences estimated that as many as  
ninety-eight thousand hospitalized persons in America die  
each year as a result of errors in their care; and

WHEREAS, there is a direct relationship between nurse  
staffing and patient well-being; and

WHEREAS, recent studies show that lean nurse staffing is  
directly associated with an increased length of time in the  
hospital and increased incidence of urinary tract infections,  
post-operative infections, gastrointestinal bleeding, cardiac  
arrest, pneumonia, pressure ulcers and death; and

1           WHEREAS, substantial decreases in mortality rates of  
2 hospitalized patients could result from increasing nurse  
3 staffing; and

4           WHEREAS, according to the United States government  
5 accountability office, the current shortage of nurses is  
6 partly due to increasingly complex patient care needs as well  
7 as decreased job satisfaction due to such factors as long  
8 working hours, heavy workloads and high emotional exhaustion;  
9 and

10           WHEREAS, in New Mexico, seventeen thousand nurses  
11 provide patient care in virtually all locations in which  
12 health care is delivered, including hospitals, nursing homes,  
13 ambulatory care settings, clinics, private homes, schools and  
14 workplaces; and

15           WHEREAS, increased nurse recruitment and retention could  
16 result in reduced errors, increased patient safety and  
17 outcomes and improved job satisfaction for nurses;

18           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
19 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico health policy  
20 commission be requested to study the impact of nurse staffing  
21 and retention issues on workforce development and patient  
22 safety; and

23           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study address standards  
24 of nurse staffing and recommended nurse-to-patient ratios,  
25 the effect of long hours on quality of patient care,

1 environment of care issues as they relate to both nurses and  
2 patients and methods of recruitment and retention of nurses  
3 in all settings; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting the study, the  
5 New Mexico health policy commission confer with others with  
6 knowledge and interest in nursing, to include the department  
7 of health, statewide associations representing hospitals and  
8 health systems, physicians, nurses, home health care  
9 providers, nurse executives and nursing homes and a statewide  
10 organization dedicated to excellence in nursing; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico health policy  
12 commission report its findings and recommendations to the  
13 legislative health and human services committee at its  
14 October 2005 meeting; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
16 sent to the director of the New Mexico health policy  
17 commission and the secretary of health. \_\_\_\_\_

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